

RESEARCH REPORT

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Background studies on day care
(Sess. pap. 81)

AN EXAMINATION OF FOUR GROUPS OF GRADE TWO PUPILS

BASED ON PRIOR PARTICIPATION IN JUNIOR KINDERGARTEN

AND NURSERY SCHOOL PROGRAMS





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Government Publications

INTRODUCTION

Junior Kindergartens have been a part of the North York school system since September, 1967.

"The necessary criteria for establishment of a Junior Kindergarten class are a combination of some or all of the following conditions: a significant number of households where English is spoken as a second language, a large number of single-parent families, a large proportion of low rental housing or persons on welfare assistance and where a school, generally speaking, has a record of below average performance by an inordinately high number of pupils."

As senior administrators have shown increasing interest in the outcomes of the Junior Kindergarten program, Research Services conducted two studies during the spring of 1971 to provide data pertaining to the following questions:

- (i) What kinds of learning experiences are the children having in Junior Kindergarten?
- (ii) Do the experiences children have in Junior Kindergarten facilitate their progress during the primary years at school?

In the first study, the Junior Kindergarten teachers were asked what they perceived as being most important during the Junior Kindergarten year in terms of the specific nature and extent of learning. The results of this study may be found in the research report entitled "A Survey of Teachers' Perceptions of the Junior Kindergarten Programme", May, 1971.

The purpose of the present study was to provide data regarding the second question.

Do the experiences children have in Junior Kindergarten facilitate their progress during the primary years at school?

^{*}Five-Year Guidelines Study, p.5.

Review of Literature *

How effective are Early Education programs? And for how long?

With the upsurge of interest during the 1960's in providing early education for young children, these questions have become of central concern to many groups of people educators, psychologists, parents.

Educators have asked such questions because of the large numbers of children that come to the elementary schools lacking what are considered to be the necessary basic social and cognitive skills.

Psychologists have become increasingly aware of the importance of the effects of early experience on learning. There are many studies (Irwin, 1948; Milner, 1951; Deutsch, 1964; Hess, 1964) to demonstrate that the development of cognitive abilities is determined largely by the availability of certain kinds of experiences in the child's early environment. Although it is difficult to know how early such experiences should be made available, as the maturation rates for specific abilities may differ for each child, the results of studies agree that it is the lack of early experience which may be most damaging.

The launching of Sputnik in the 1950's had tremendous repercussions on education, particularly in the United States. There was increased pressure to improve quality and standards. Many parents, also, responded to these concerns by emphasizing the development of intellectual and readiness skills in their young children either through home instruction or by sending their children to nursery school. However, often lower socio-economic families could not or did not avail themselves of these advantages, either because they did not recognize the need or when they did, had no resources available in either skills or money to pursue such goals. The disparities between lower and middle-class environments produce a "dilemma of discontinuity" in regard to schooling as described by Jacob Getzels (as cited in Frost, 1968).

The following is a brief review of the literature related to Early Education programs. For a more extensive review, the reader is referred to Garthson, Judy and Crawford, Patricia, Early Education - An Appraisal of Research. Research Department, Board of Education for the City of Toronto, 1970.

"The values, language, information and methods of learning acquired by the middle class child are continuous with what will be required of him in school; the values, language, information and method of learning acquired by the lower class child are discontinuous with what will be required of him in school. It is as if the one group obtained a set of tools applicable to the school situation, but the school expected the two groups to perform as if they had equally applicable tools and resources". (Getzels, as cited in Frost, 1968, p.38).

The provisions subsequently made in an attempt to meet some of the needs of the children in these families took the form of programs such as Head Start in the United States and in North York, Junior Kindergartens.

The answer to the question - Are Early Education Programs Effective? - is certainly not a simple one. The extensive research emanating from the Head Start program seems to indicate that, generally, children who attended Head Start programs for a full year demonstrated gains, particularly in measures of IQ, when compared with a group of children who did not attend Head Start. However when tested at the end of grade 1 or 2, the Head Start children had not maintained their gains.

The Westinghouse Learning Corporation (1969) conducted an extensive study during 1968-69 to investigate the following question:

To what extent are the children now in first, second or third grades who attended Head Start programmes different in their intellectual and social-personal development from comparable children who did not attend?" (Executive Summary, p.2).

Their study sample which included children from 104 Head Start centres across the U.S., plus a matched sample of control children, were administered a series of tests to assess their degree of cognitive and affective development. Although the results for the total national sample indicated no significant differences on any of the measures between children who attended Head Start, either for a full year or during a summer program, and those children who did not, the results of a series of sub-analyses did indicate that where

centres were located in the southeastern United States, in core cities of mainly negro composition, and where the children attended a full year programme, there were significant differences in favour of the Head Start children, primarily in the cognitive measures. It must be pointed out, however, that although the scores of the Head Start children were significantly higher than those of the control group, their scores were still considerably below national norms on the standardized tests of language development and achievement.

The study concludes that:

"Head Start as it is presently constituted has not provided widespread significant cognitive and affective gains which are supported, reinforced or maintained in conventional education programs in the primary grades". (Executive Summary, p.9).

Another researcher came to a similar conclusion:

"... although there are many possible products of Head Start participation, few are as yet definitively measured. More importantly, in whatever form such gains appear, they can be dissipated in the absence of continued development and nurturance in the primary school experience". (Gordon, 1966, p.4)

Although the vast majority of the research findings on Head Start are consistent with the results of the Westinghouse study, they must be viewed with some degree of caution. Guidelines were established for the programme in six broad areas, although it was left to the individual centre to decide how to implement them. This often meant that there was a failure to state the objectives for the program in specific behavioural or performance terms. Consequently the measures used in assessment were often not relevant to the goals of the particular program. For example, IQ tests were usually administered before and after the program, regardless of whether a general aim of the program was one of intellectual gains. If the major aims of a program were in the social and emotional domains and not evaluated directly, then you are not in a very strong position to judge whether that program was successful in meeting those objectives, if only IQ gains were measured.

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In the case of Early Education programs other than Head Start, the more structured programs tend to result in greater I.Q. gains and better language development than less structured programs. However, as with Head Start, there is a tendency for the gains to level off after the children have left the program and are enrolled in the public school system. (Karnes, 1966, 1968; Di Lorenzo, et al, 1968).

In Toronto, Junior Kindergartens have been operated by the Toronto Board of Education since 1947. In 1960-61, the Research Department of the Board began a longitudinal study to evaluate the effects of Junior Kindergarten experience upon the achievement and development of children. Results reported after the first five years of the study indicated that children who have been to Junior Kindergarten seem to derive some advantage from this experience in senior kindergarten and grade 1; however, by the time they reach grade 3, the positive effect is minimal. (Palmer, 1966).

What conclusions can be reached on the basis of the available research? Programs directed towards limited aspects of the child's development have had success in these areas for a limited time. No program has been shown to have widespread effects. No program has been demonstrated to make a major change which continued to be visible when the child continued to live and develop in the same environment and when the school system remained relatively the same.



PURPOSE

The purpose of this study was to examine four groups of pupils in grade 2 1 in terms of several aspects of their academic and social behaviour:

- (1) Those pupils in schools offering Junior Kindergarten who attended the program;
- (2) Those pupils in schools offering Junior Kindergarten who did not attend the program;
- (3) Those pupils in schools <u>not</u> offering Junior Kindergarten, who attended nursery school prior to entering public school;
- (4) Those pupils in schools not offering Junior Kindergarten, who did not attend nursery school.

The resulting examination of the four groups would provide data regarding the question:

Do the experiences children have in Junior Kindergarten facilitate their progress during the primary years at school?

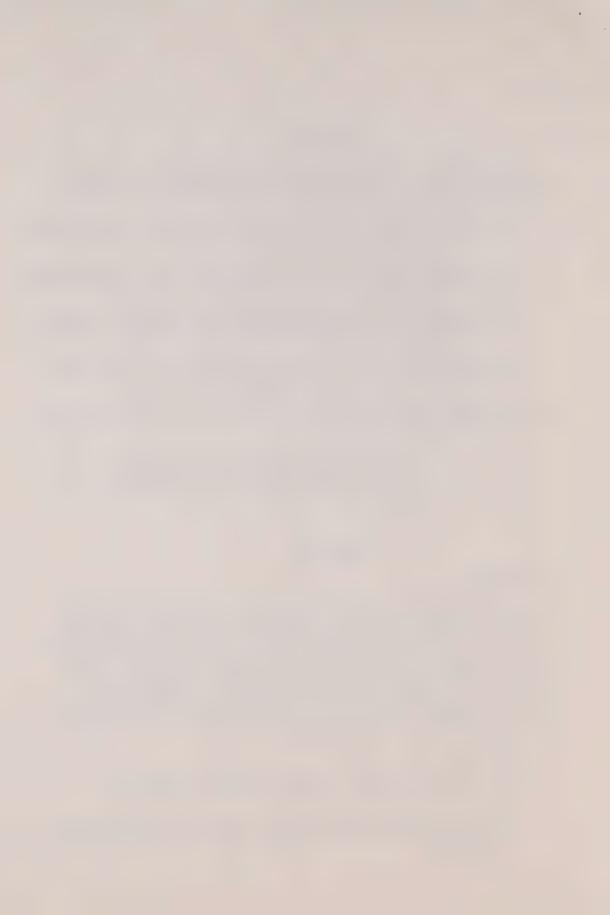
PROCEDURE

Instrument

A Teacher Rating Questionnaire was developed comprised of eight statements related to various aspects of academic and social behaviour (see Appendix A). The classroom teacher was asked to give each pupil a rating of 0,2,4,6, or 8 depending upon the extent to which the pupil displayed the behaviour being rated. A brief descriptive statement accompanied each possible rating to provide the teacher with a guideline for determining which rating was most appropriate for a particular pupil. The following item from the questionnaire is given as an example:

¹The group of pupils who participated in the first Junior Kindergarten classes are now in grade 2.

The questionnaire was based on a similar questionnaire developed by the Research Department, Toronto Board of Education.



Ability to get along

Interacts with most of his classmates in a satisfactory manner.

- 0. Unable to get along in classroom, (or in schoolyard), always quarrelsome in social contacts.
- 2. Frequently quarrelsome, or limits social contacts to one or two chosen friends.
- 4. Gets along with most pupils, and regularly participates in group activities.
- 6. Often shows leadership ability in group activities, and is popular with most classmates.
- 8. Consistently shows leadership ability in social contacts, and is trusted by other children.

Sample

Six schools participated in the study. Three of the schools offer a Junior Kindergarten program, while the remaining three schools do not.

Method

Mrs. Lynne Brenner, Research Consultant, visited each of the six schools to explain the Teacher Rating Questionnaire to the grade 2 teachers. The teachers were asked to rate each pupil in their classroom on each of the eight items included in the questionnaire. The ratings were recorded on a mark sense card, a separate card being used for each pupil.

Mrs. Brenner returned to each school one week later to collect the ratings and to obtain two further pieces of information from the O.S.R. files, sex of the child and whether or not he had attended Junior Kindergarten. In those schools in which Junior Kindergarten was not available, information was collected concerning whether or not the child had attended nursery school prior to entering Kindergarten.



RESULTS

Completed ratings were obtained for 193 pupils in schools offering a Junior Kindergarten program and 234 pupils in schools not offering such a program. Table 1 provides a breakdown in terms of the number of boys and girls who attended Junior Kindergarten or Nursery school.

TABLE 1

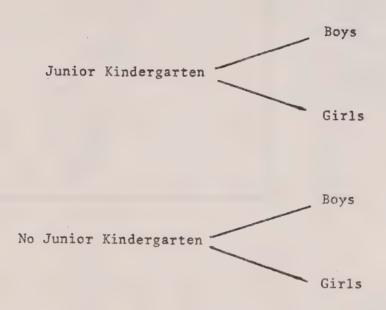
	Attended Junior Kinder- garten	Did not attend Junior Kinder- garten.		Attended Nursery School	Did not attend Nursery School	
BOYS	4 3	5 2	BOYS	6 2	5 6	
GIRLS	4 1	5 7	GIRLS	6 5	5 1	
·			193			234

With the assistance of Mr. Dave Day, Computer Services, means and standard deviations were calculated for each of the eight items included in the questionnaire for each of the eight groups of students shown in Table 1. The results for schools in which Junior Kindergarten is available will be discussed separately from the results for those schools which do not offer a Junior Kindergarten program.

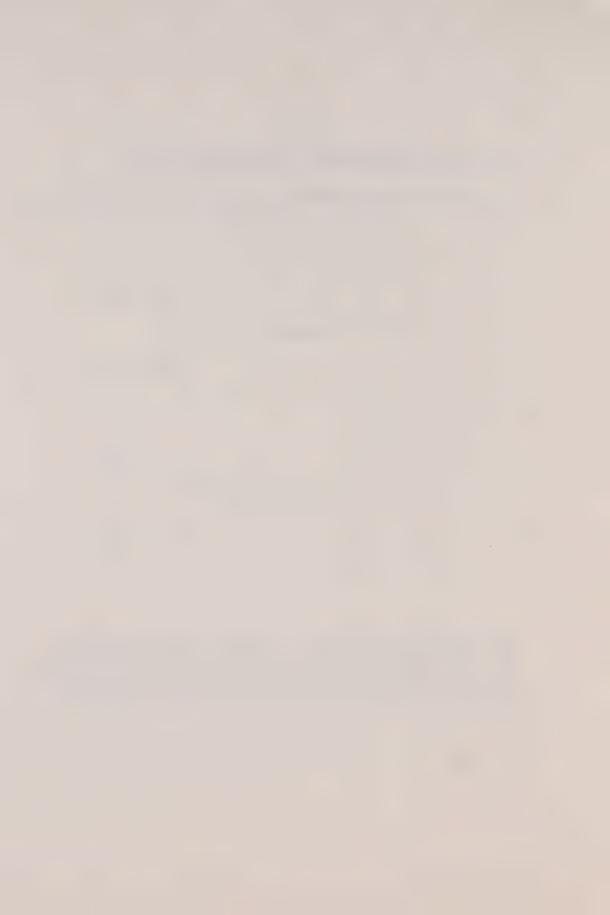


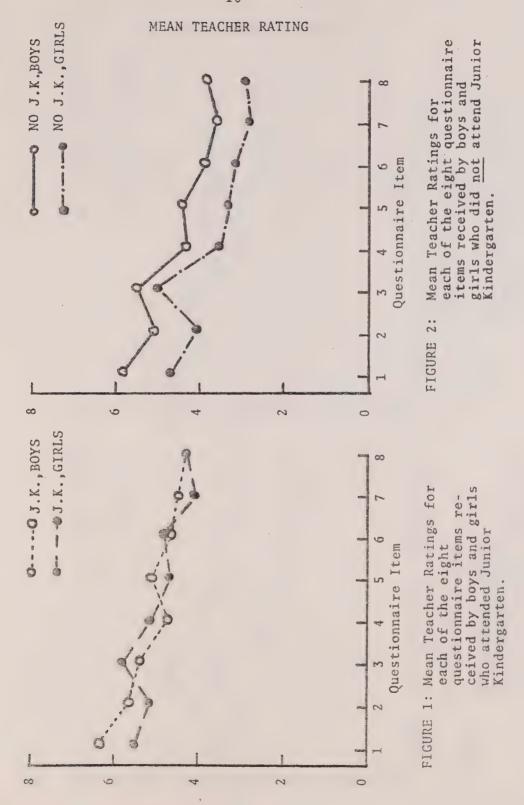
Schools Offering a Junior Kindergarten Program

The mean ratings obtained by each of the following four groups -



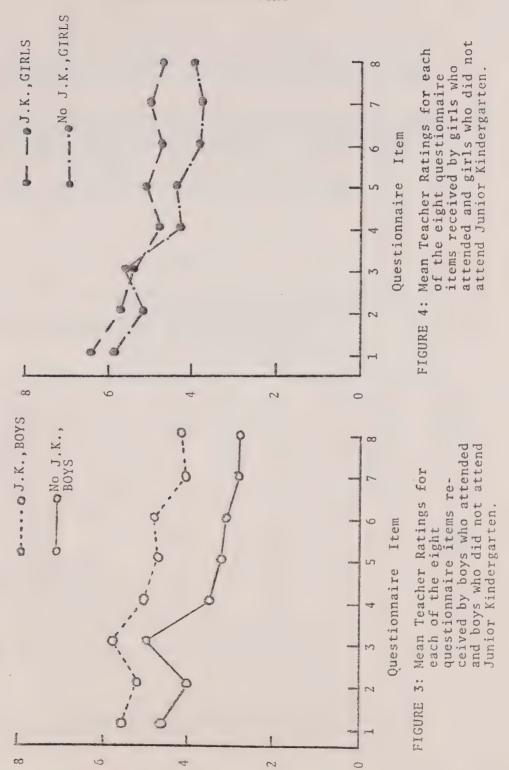
are presented graphically in Figures 1 - 4, respectively. As a preliminary inspection of these figures indicated that the ratings obtained by boys and girls who had attended Junior Kindergarten were very similar, the data for these two groups were pooled for the purposes of further analyses.

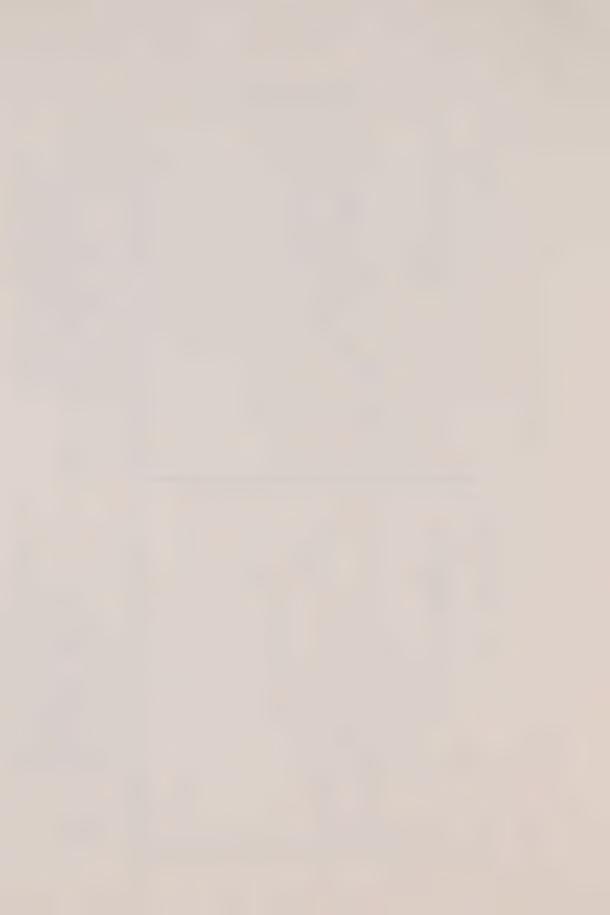






MEAN TEACHER RATING





Three sets of t tests were conducted to compare the mean ratings received by each of the following pairs of groups:

- Junior Kindergarten vs No Junior Kindergarten, Males. Junior Kindergarten vs No Junior Kindergarten, Females.
- No Junior Kindergarten, Males vs No Junior Kindergarten, Females.

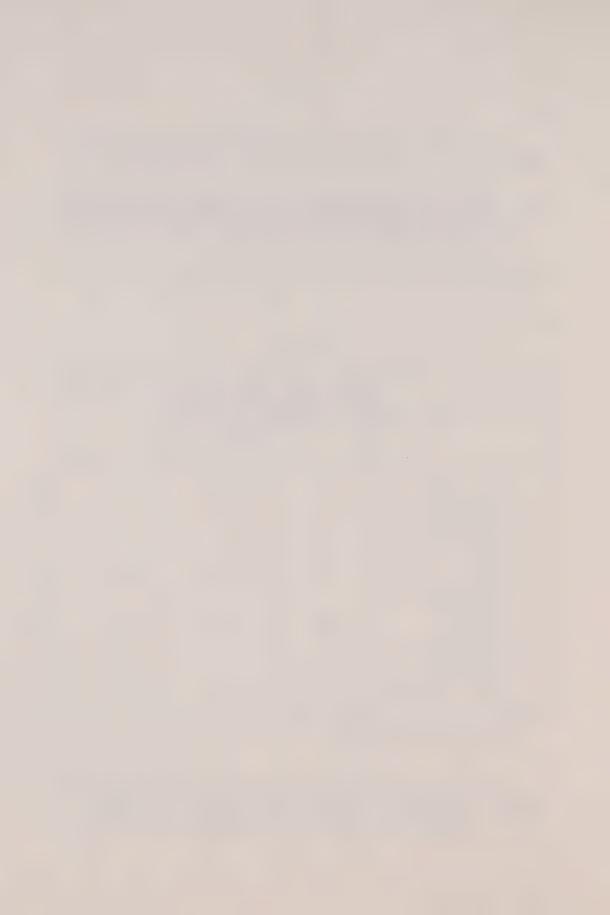
These data are presented in Tables 2,3 and 4 respectively.

TABLE 2

QUESTIONNAIRE ITEM	Mean Rating For Students Who Attended J.K. (N=84)		t Value	
1. Discipline 2. Acceptance of Routines 3. Acceptance of Goals 4. Ability to Get Along 5. Attention and Work Completion 6. Reading 7. Language, Self Expression 8. Prediction of School Success	6.0 5.5 5.6 5.0 4.9 4.8 4.3	4.7 4.0 5.0 3.6 3.3 3.1 2.8 2.9	3.7 4.4 1.7 4.8 4.7 4.6 4.1 4.0	· · · · · · · · · · · · · ·

for 134 degrees of freedom, critical value of t = 3.29, p. < .001

The results of this set of t tests indicate that for each item included in the Teacher Rating Questionnaire, except "acceptance of goals", boys who did not attend Junior Kindergarten received significantly lower mean



ratings than the pupils, both boys and girls, who attended Junior Kindergarten. Each of these differences could have occurred by chance less than one time in a thousand!

TABLE 3

QUESTIONNAIRE ITEM	Mean Rating for Junior Kindergarten pupils. (N=84)	Mean Rating For Girls Who Did Not Attend Junior Kinder- garten.(N=57)	t Value
1. Discipline 2. Acceptance of Routines 3. Acceptance of Goals 4. Ability to Get Along 5. Attention and Work Completion 6. Reading 7. Language, Self-Expression 8. Prediction of School Success	6.0 5.5 5.6 5.0 4.9 4.8 4.3	6.0 5.1 5.5 4.4 4.4 3.9 3.7	1.0 0.3 2.1 1.6 2.7 1.6

for 139 degrees of freedom critical value of t = 2.58, p < .01

The results presented in Table 3 indicate that girls who did not attend Junior Kindergarten received significantly lower mean ratings than pupils who did attend Junior Kindergarten on only two of the eight items in the questionnaire "ability to get along" and "reading", respectively. For the remaining six items, the mean ratings for the two groups were not significantly different.

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^{*}for 139 degrees of freedom critical value of t = 1.96, p < .05



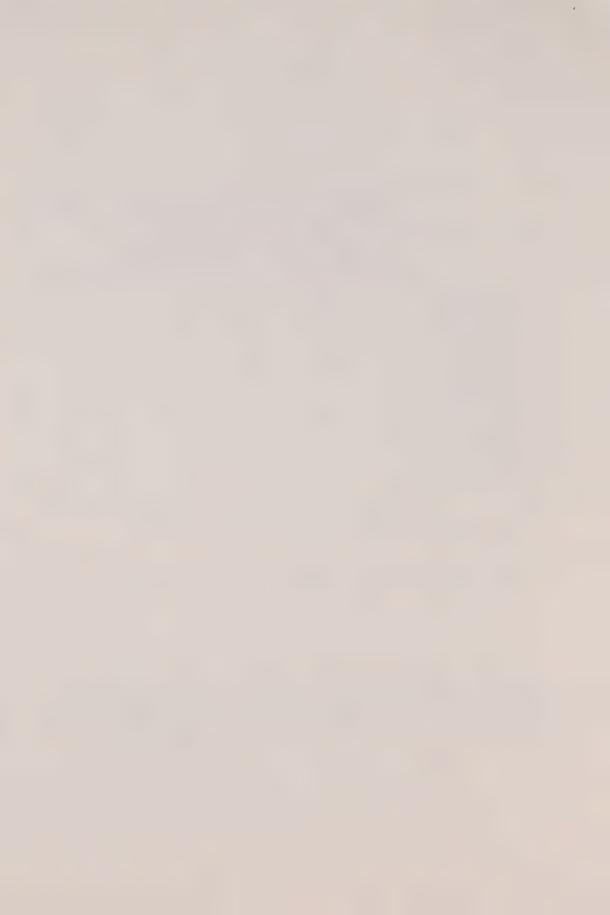
TABLE 4

QUESTIONNAIRE ITEM	Mean Rating For Girls Who Did Not Attend Junior Kinder- garten. (N=57)	Mean Rating For Boys Who Did Not Attend Junior Kinder- garten.(N=52)	t Value	
				1
1. Discipline 2. Acceptance of	6.0	4.7	3.4	**
Routines 3. Acceptance of	5.1	4.0	2.7	2.8
Goals 4. Ability to	5.5	5.0	1.3	
Get Along 5. Attention and	4.4	3.6	2.6	**
Work Completion 6. Reading	4.4	3.3	2.8	**
	3.9	3.1	1.8	
7. Language, Self	~ -			
Expression Production of	3.7	2.8	2.3	*
8. Prediction of School Success	3.8	2.9	2.4	*
			₩ • T	

for 107 degrees of freedom, critical value of
t = 2.62, p < .01</pre>

As seen in Table 4, boys who did not attend Junior Kindergarten obtained significantly lower mean ratings on six of the eight teacher ratings than girls who did not attend Junior Kindergarten. The two items on which boys and girls were not significantly different were "acceptance of goals" and "reading".

^{*}for 107 degrees of freedom, critical value of t = 1.98, p < .05

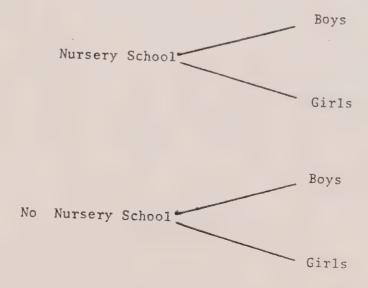


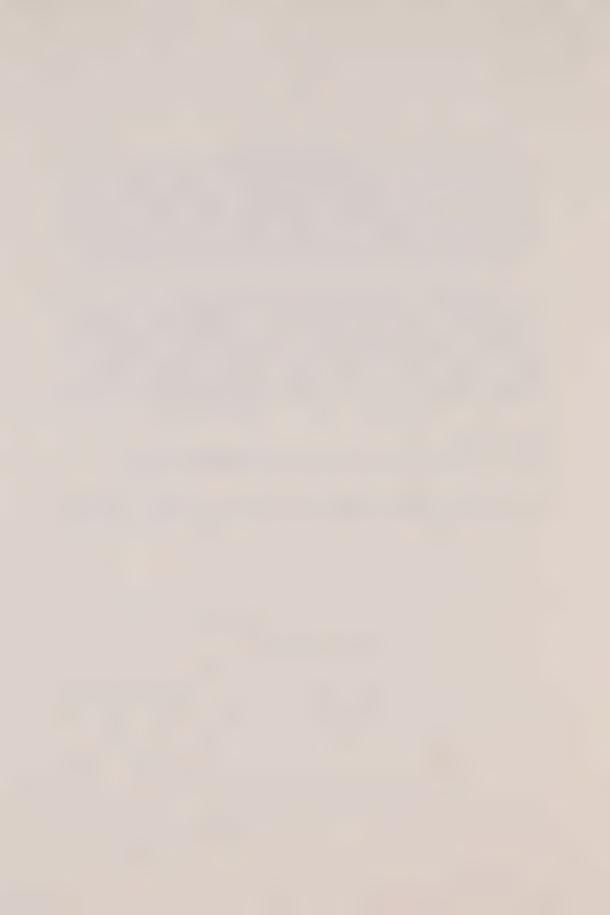
To summarize the results presented in Tables 2, 3 and 4, boys who had not attended Junior Kindergarten received mean ratings on various dimensions of both academic and social behaviour which were significantly lower than the mean ratings obtained by either girls who had not attended Junior Kindergarten or boys and girls who did attend Junior Kindergarten. Boys who have not attended Junior Kindergarten are therefore at a disadvantage compared to their classmates.

One other finding which should be noted is that related to "reading". Boys and girls who did not attend Junior Kindergarten received similar mean ratings for "reading" (see Table 4), although each of these groups received significantly lower mean ratings than pupils who attended Junior Kindergarten (see Tables 2 and 3, respectively). Thus, pupils who have not attended Junior Kindergarten are poorer readers, on the average, than pupils who have attended Junior Kindergarten

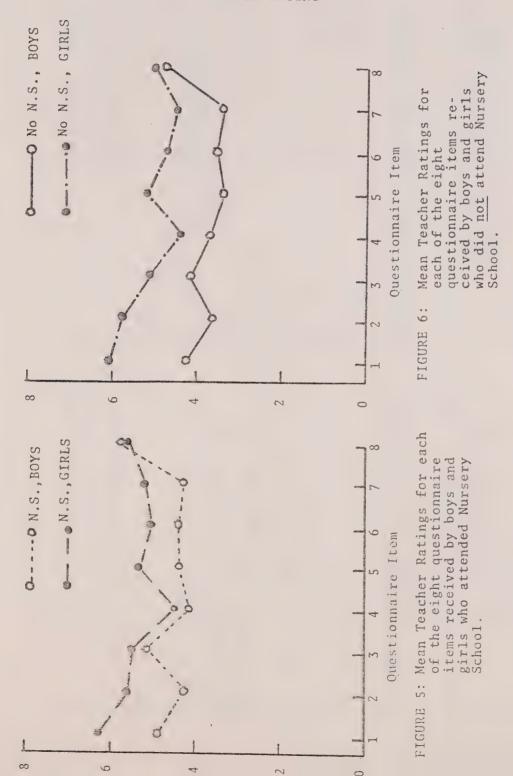
Schools Not Offering A Junior Kindergarten Program

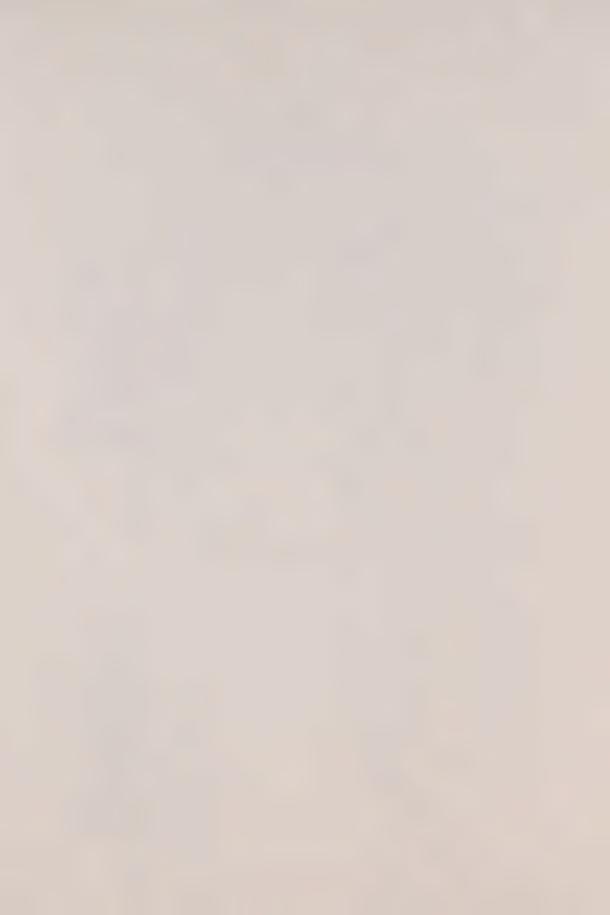
A graphical presentation of the mean ratings for each item may be found in Figures 5 - 8 for each of the following four groups -



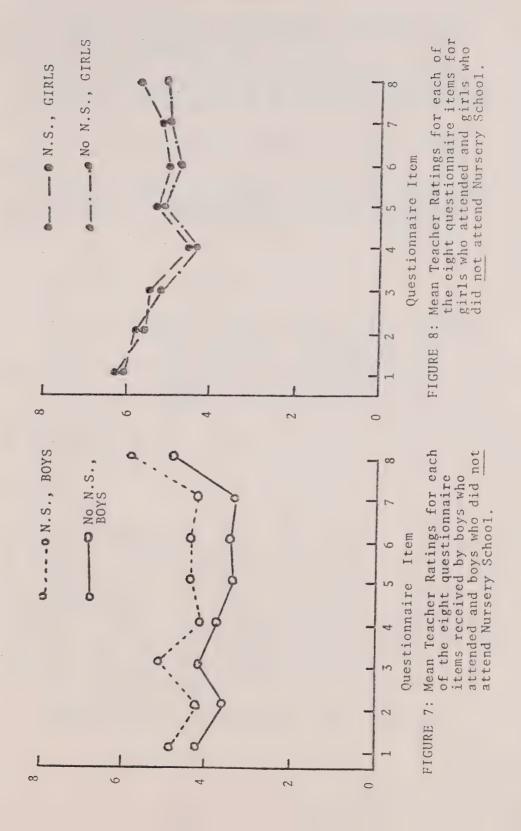


MEAN TEACHER RATING





MEAN TEACHER RATING





As with the Junior Kindergarten data discussed above, three sets of t tests were calculated to compare the mean ratings for the following pairs of groups:

1. Nursery school, Males vs nursery school, Females.

2. No nursery school, Males vs no nursery school, Females.

3. Nursery school, Males vs no nursery school, Males.

These data are presented in Tables 5,6 and 7 respectively.

As shown in Figure 8, the mean ratings for females who have and have not attended nursery school are almost identical, therefore it was not necessary to calculate the t values.

TABLE 5

QUESTIONNAIRE ITEM	Mean Rating For Girls Who Attended Nursery School. (N=65).	Mean Rating For Boys Who Attended Nursery School (N=62).	t Value	
1. Discipline	6.4	4.9	4.4	***
2. Acceptance of Routines	5.6	4.3	3.8	***
3. Acceptance of Goals	5.5	5.2	0.9	
4. Ability to Get Along	4.5	4.3	0.8	
5. Attention and				**
Work Completion 6. Reading	5.4 5.1	4.4 4.5	2.8	~ ~
7. Language, Self Expression	5.2	4.4	2.4	zh:
8. Prediction of School Success	5.9	6.0	-0.3	

for 125 degrees of freedom, critical value of t = 3.29, p < .001

^{**} for 125 degrees of freedom, critical value of t = 2.61, p < .01

^{*}for 125 degrees of freedom, critical value of t = 1.98, p < .05



As indicated in Table 5, boys who have attended nursery school received significantly lower mean ratings on the following items, "discipline", "acceptance of routines", "attention and work completion" and "language and self expression". On the remaining four items the mean ratings for boys were not different from the mean ratings for girls.

TABLE 6

				1
OUESTIONNAIRE ITEM	Mean Rating For Girls Who Did Not Attend Nursery School. (N=51).	Mean Rating For Boys Who Did Not Attend Nursery School. (N=56).	t Value	
1. Discipline	6.2	4.4	5.3	***
2. Acceptance of Routines	5.8	3.6	6.3	***
3. Acceptance of Goals	5.3	4.2	2.8	**
4. Ability to Get Along	4.5	3.8	2.3	*
5. Attention and Work Completion	5.3 4.8	3.5	4.8	***
6. Reading 7. Language, Self	4.8	3.5	2.6	**
Expression 8. Prediction of School Success	5.1	4.9	0.7	

for 105 degrees of freedom, critical value of t = 3.37, p < .001

**
for 105 degrees of freedom, critical value of
t = 2.61, p < .01</pre>

*for 105 degrees of freedom, critical value of t = 1.98, p < .05

Of those children who did not attend nursery school, the boys received significantly lower mean ratings than the girls on all items but one, prediction of how far the child will go in school. In the case of the latter item, teachers predicted that on the average, both boys and girls would complete their schooling beyond high school, but would not complete university.



TABLE 7

QUESTIONNAIRE ITEM	Mean Rating For Boys Who Attended Nursery School. (N=62).	Mean Rating For Boys Who Did Not Attend Nursery School. (N=56).	t Value	
1. Discipline 2. Acceptance of Routines 3. Acceptance of Goals 4. Ability to Get Along 5. Attention and Work Completion 6. Reading 7. Language, Self Expression 8. Prediction of School Success	4.9 4.3 5.2 4.3 4.4 4.5 4.4 6.0	4.3 3.6 4.2 3.8 3.5 3.5 3.5	1.4 2.0 2.8 1.7 2.7 2.4 2.5 3.1	** *** *** **

for 116 degrees of freedom critical value of
t = 2.61, p < .01</pre>

Boys who have not gone to nursery school received significantly lower mean ratings than their male classmates who did attend nursery school on the following items, "acceptance of goals", "attention and work completion", "reading", "language and self expression", and "prediction of school success".

To summarize the results for those schools in which Junior Kindergarten is not available, it appears that boys, whether or not they have attended nursery school, tend to receive lower ratings, on the average than girls. In addition, boys who have not attended nursery school are rated lower than their male classmates who have attended nursery school.

^{*}for 116 degrees of freedom, critical value of t = 1.98, p < .05

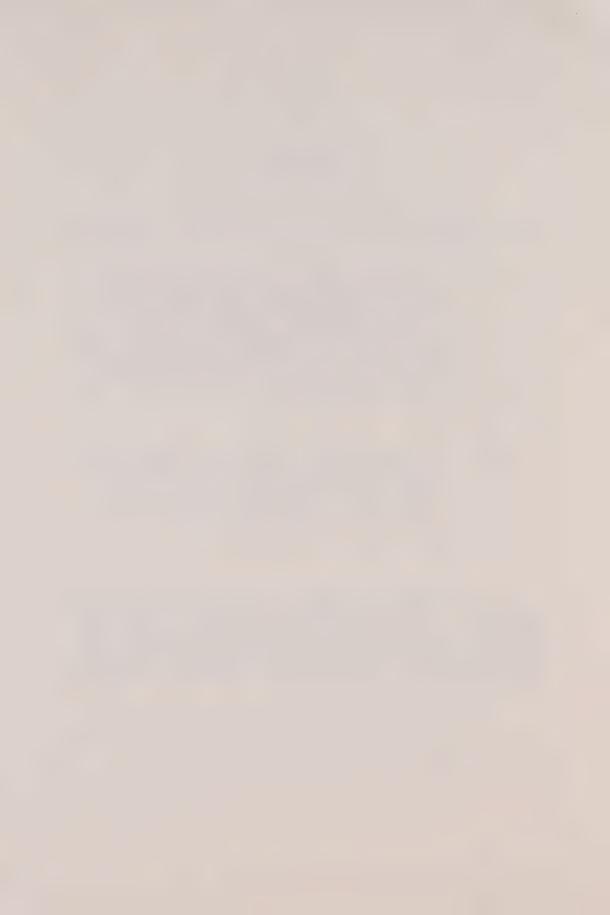


CONCLUSIONS

Our examination of four groups of grade 2 students indicated that:

- (1) In those schools offering a Junior Kindergarten program, boys who did not attend Junior Kindergarten received much lower ratings than their classmates. While the greatest difference was between these boys and pupils who attended Junior Kindergarten, there was a reasonable difference between them and the girls who also did not attend Junior Kindergarten.
- (2) In those schools not offering Junior Kindergarten, boys who had not attended nursery school were rated lower than their male classmates who had; both groups of boys received lower ratings than girls.

It was assumed, of course, in this study that teacher ratings are a valid description of actual classroom performance. It was also assumed that differences in the experience of the pupils within each set of schools were randomly distributed, thus our findings have definite implications for the value of Junior Kindergarten and Nursery School programs.

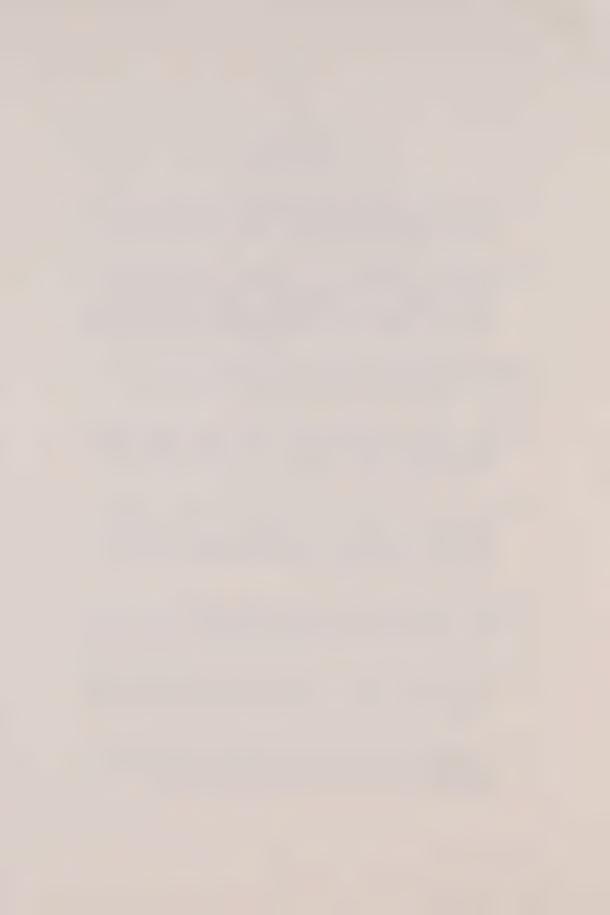


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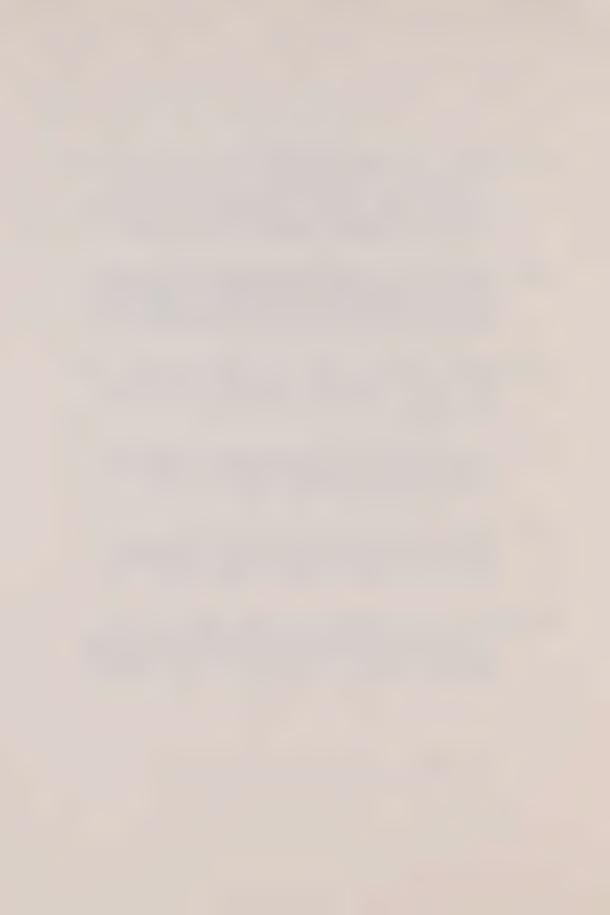
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APPENDIX



TEACHERS' RATING QUESTIONNAIRE

Grade 2

INSTRUCTIONS

- 1. Please read each question carefully.
- Decide from your own knowledge the ratings for each child.



1. DISCIPLINE

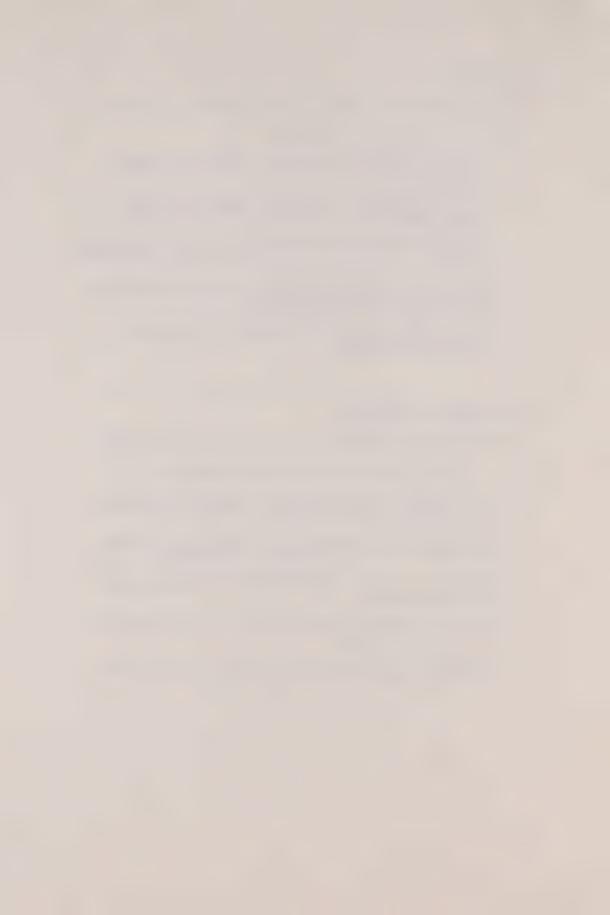
Displays behaviour that you, the teacher, consider appropriate for your classroom.

- O. Constant discipline problem; behaviour always inappropriate.
- 2. Frequent discipline problem; behaviour often inappropriate.
- 4. Occasional discipline problem; exercises some self control.
- 6. Very seldom causes discipline problems, exercises self control most of the time.
- 8. Never causes discipline problems, behaviour always appropriate.

2. ACCEPTANCE OF ROUTINES

Accepts responsibility in connection with classroom work, seatwork, routine rules and directions.

- 0. Never accepts responsibility; needs constant help and attention from teacher.
- 2. Seldom accepts responsibility; has to be coaxed, inconsistent in his response to routines.
- 4. Frequently accepts responsibility; tries to look after his tasks.
- Regularly accepts responsibility; looks after his tasks almost always.
- 8. Consistently accepts responsibility; looks after his tasks successfully all the time.



3. ACCEPTANCE OF GOALS

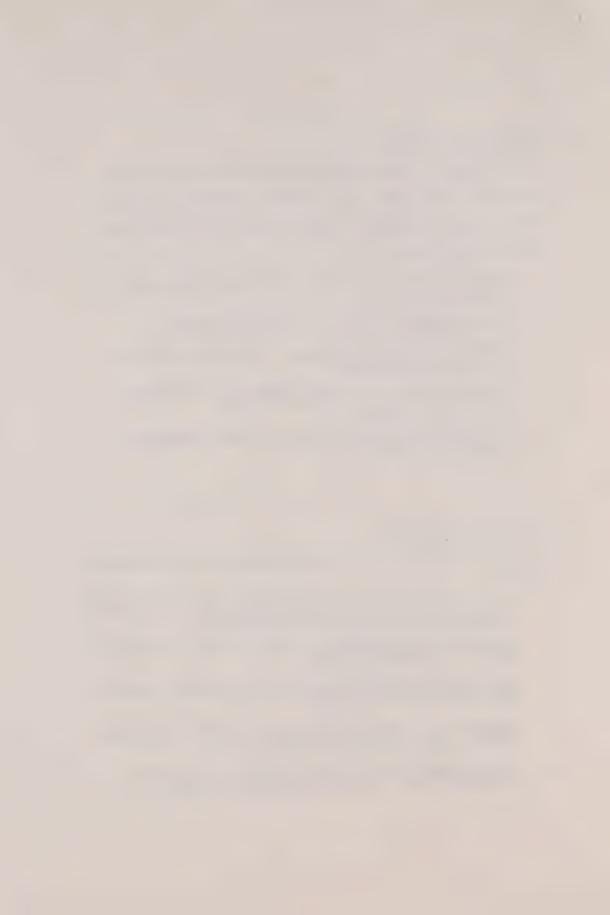
Shows <u>desire</u> to make <u>positive</u> contributions towards classroom activities, i.e., answers questions readily, moves in gym willingly, sings in music periods, talks during discussions.

- 0. Shows no interest in the activities, makes no contribution.
- 2. Shows <u>limited</u> interest in a few activities.
- 4. Responsive towards <u>numerous</u> activities, able to contribute <u>sometimes</u>.
- 6. Shows interest in a great number of activities, contributes often.
- 8. Is interested in all activities and contributes whenever possible.

4. ABILITY TO GET ALONG

Interacts with most of his classmates in a satisfactory manner.

- O. Unable to get along in classroom, (or in schoolyard), always quarrelsome in social contacts.
- Frequently quarrelsome, or limits social contacts to one or two chosen friends.
- 4. Gets along with most pupils, and regularly participates in group activities.
- 6. Often shows leadership ability in group activities, and is popular with most classmates.
- 8. Consistently shows leadership ability in social contacts, and is trusted by other children.



5. ATTENTION AND WORK COMPLETION

Has good attention span, is able to attend to teacher and assignments without constant encouragement.

- Extremely short attention span, easily distracted, seldom if ever, finished assignments.
- 2. Short attention span, easily distracted, gets work done occasionally.
- 4. Able to listen for the duration of the lesson, usually gets his work done.
- 6. Above average attention span, gets his work done regularly.
- 8. Superior attention span, will work at any task as long as necessary, till it is completed.

6. READING

Reads with comprehension and fluency, conveys meaning to listeners.

- 0. Reads with little or no comprehension, mostly word by word, without much meaning.
- 2. Reads with word recognition and comprehension at bottom level of class.
- 4. Reads with comprehension and fluency, conveys meaning at middle level of class.
- 6. Reads with word recognition and comprehension at top level of class.
- 8. Superior reader, able to comprehend most material encountered, e.g., magazines and books at higher grade levels.

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7. LANGUAGE, SELF EXPRESSION

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Can tell or write "stories"; expresses self clearly.

- Occasionally attempts to tell or write a "story";
 "Stories" consist of one or two sentences;
 "Stories" consist of one or two sentences;
 Sentences may be completely unrelated.
- Frequently attempts to tell, or write, a "story" "Stories" have many irrelevant ideas.
- Regularly attempts to tell or write a "story";
 Few, if any, irrelevant ideas.
- 6. Consistently attempts to tell or write "stories"; Few, if any, irrelevant ideas; Occasional use of complex sentences.
- 8. Tells or writes <u>coherent</u> "stories";
 No irrelevant ideas, use of complex and compound sentences;
 Unusually good command of language.
- 8. To provide your estimate of this child's <u>ability</u>, try to predict how far you think he will go (ignore financial ability of parents).
 - 0. Will have difficulty completing Junior High School
 - 2. Will not complete High School.
 - 4. Will complete High School.
 - 6. Will go to University
 - 8. Will go beyond a B.A.